

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) A hydraulic lash adjuster for an internal combustion engine including a cylinder head and a rocker arm, the hydraulic lash adjuster comprising:

a bottomed cylinder fixed to the cylinder head;

a plunger having a bottom wall and an upper end supporting the rocker arm, the plunger being vertically movable while being brought into sliding contact with an inner circumferential face of the cylinder;

a low-pressure chamber defined in the plunger and filled with a hydraulic fluid;

a high-pressure chamber defined in a lower interior of the cylinder and partitioned by the bottom wall of the plunger from the low-pressure chamber, the high-pressure chamber being filled with the hydraulic fluid;

a valve port formed through the bottom wall of the plunger so as to communicate ~~between the with both low-pressure chamber and the high-pressure chambers therebetween~~ chamber, the valve port having at ~~a the high-pressure chamber side~~ an opening edge formed with a valve seat face; and

a valve element provided in the high-pressure chamber so as to abut and depart from the valve seat face, thereby closing and opening the valve port,

wherein the valve element is made of a material having a specific gravity smaller than steel but higher than the surrounding hydraulic fluid.

Claim 2 (Original) The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 1, wherein the valve element is made of a ceramic containing silicon nitride.

Claim 3 (New) A hydraulic lash adjuster for an internal combustion engine including a cylinder head and a rocker arm, the hydraulic lash adjuster comprising:

a bottomed cylinder fixed to the cylinder head;

a plunger having a bottom wall and an upper end supporting the rocker arm, the plunger being vertically movable while being brought into sliding contact with an inner circumferential face of the cylinder;

a low-pressure chamber defined in the plunger and filled with a hydraulic fluid;

a high-pressure chamber defined in a lower interior of the cylinder and partitioned by the bottom wall of the plunger from the low-pressure chamber, the high-pressure chamber being filled with the hydraulic fluid;

a valve port formed through the bottom wall of the plunger so as to communicate with the with both low-pressure chamber and the high-pressure chambers therebetween chamber, the valve port having at the high-pressure chamber side an opening edge formed with a valve seat face; and

a valve element provided in the high-pressure chamber so as to abut and depart from the valve seat face, thereby closing and opening the valve port,

wherein the valve seat face is an arcuate face.

Claim 4 (New) The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is made of a material with a specific gravity in the range between hydraulic fluid and steel.

Claim 5 (New) The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is made of a ceramic containing silicon nitride.

Claim 6 (New) The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is biased in the closing direction by a spring element.

Claim 7 (New) The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 6, wherein the spring element biasing the valve element in the closing direction comprises a first spring element and a second spring element.